

IMEA TECHNOLOGY ROUNDTABLE

Notes from David Brian Williams (david.williams@tech4music.net)

January 26, 2007 (2 pm)

Roundtable participants: Neal Smith (moderator), Sam Reese, Maud Hickey, David Williams, and Chuck Ciorba. The following are my personal notes made in preparation for the Roundtable in response to Neal Smith's questions.

Introductions

DBW: Emeritus Professor of Music and Arts Technology from ISU. Current interests in the use of technology to reach the "non-traditional student" (those not engaged in traditional music activities in schools) with looping software and innovative MIDI performance tools and working on a minor update to text co-authored with Peter Webster, *Experiencing Music Technology*, and serving various assignments on the TI:ME and College Music Society boards. See www.ilstu.edu/~dwilliam for more personal background information.

Q1. The current state of technology being used in the music classrooms? What do we do well? Do poorly? What kinds of tools and applications do we see most often? Neal: Interest at IMEA conferences, MIDI labs more common, websites, recordings.

DBW:

1. We use technology "in support" of music teaching well. The Bank Street School did a survey about 1982 and found that most computer use was for WP. I think that is improved, but the primary use is still tools in support of our teaching such as notation, creating websites, using a digital camera and simple photo editing, creating MP3 files and burning CDs.

What we don't do well is use technology as an integral part of the teaching/learning process. The elementary/general music teachers likely do this more effectively than most music educators with software like Rock Rap'n Roll, Making Music by Subotnick, Music Ace, etc.

2. Not sure music computer labs are all that common. Think we are doing better with one computer per classroom (1-to-many models), especially with laptop prevalence. I have many music teachers asking for help with teaching strategies for using one computer in a classroom. Here is a critical need that could use our support and innovative thinking.

Many smaller schools have a common computer lab and music teachers have to compete with other disciplines to use, not always successfully.

3. Schools provide funds for hardware, but software funding comes up short. This makes it difficult for music teachers to implement a lot of the innovative things they see at a conference like IMEA.

Q2. Are there any examples of especially innovative uses of technology we have seen in schools? Neal: Vermont MIDI, Assessment (Smart Music), Websites to support instruction.

DBW:

1. My focus is on programs that are using technology to reach out to the "other students," what I am currently labeling as the "non-traditional music student (NTMS)." These students need creative music activities that exploit their music listening experience, activities that are not

notation based and, if performance is involved, uses guitar, drums, voice, or unique MIDI tools that do not demand lots of performance skills.

2. Quotes from Lucy Green's "How Popular Musicians Learn" (2002).

"...Music educators should examine...the informal learning practices, attitudes, and values...of popular musicians...in relation to the changing position of popular music in education over the last forty years or so.. Otherwise, we could be deprived of the means of acquiring the skills and knowledge of some of the very music that is purported to be represented in formal music education; we could continue to bypass those children and young people who are nonetheless highly musically motivated and committed in their lives outside the classroom; and we could ignore a potentially worthwhile, accessible and inspiring repertoire of approaches to music learning." (p. 17)

Green talks about three types of music listening: purposeful, attentive, and distractive (about pg. 23).

"...Popular musicians rarely use music notation, and whether they use it or not, they must be able to play without it, on the basis of what has been learnt through listening." (p. 29)

"Although...notation in one form or another plays a role in learning for many popular musicians in the early stages , it is always heavily mixed in with aural practices, and used as a supplement rather than a major learning resource." (p. 38)

"Out of fourteen [pop] musicians, only one mentioned school as having been the trigger for his interest in playing a popular music instrument." (p. 29)

3. Exemplary programs on my list nationally are the work of

- Ken Simpson (Brookwood HS in Atlanta, most comprehensive program found that reaches the other 70% or NTMS students, see metmagazine.com/mag/technology_fosters_growth),
- Marj Haber (Orchard Lake Middle School in West Bloomfield MI, focus on non-notation-based music creative experiences, see metmagazine.com/mag/pumping_program_west) , and
- Rick Dammers (formerly of the Ladue School District in Missouri, now Rowan University NJ, non-traditional students and modeling of musical styles with music software, see users.rowan.edu/%7Edammers/bio.html).

4. Illinois exemplary work from two of my graduate students and an ISU grad,

- Nathan Edwards (Tremont, 1-to-many classroom technology and composing to video, nedwards@roe53.k12.il.us). Recent e-mail note from Nathan:
- "As far as my education goes, your course last semester has opened a whole new world to me. I am now using technology most every day in my class in one way or another. As computer lab time is scarce and money for multiple copies of software is even more scarce, I have begun to wring out every ounce of benefit I can from my current in class setup, which is one classroom computer with a projector, SmartBoard interactive whiteboard, and.....30 clickers! (Excited about this....wrote a grant for Turningpoint hardware and it was funded)"

- Corey Beirne (Flannigan, recording/composing studio for non-traditional and other students, cbeirne@flanagan.k12.il.us). Email from Corey:

"I am looking for some new directions to move to with my students. I have a section of music tech students and we have done much with composition and creation using the main components of GarageBand, ACID, and Audacity. I am looking into getting into the more detailed aspects of audio editing, particularly using effects available in GarageBand such as echo, distortion, reverb, etc. I would like to relate it as much as possible to the vocational side of audio editing...why and how are these effects used by audio engineers? and give my students a "real world"sampling of audio editing."

- Carol Broos (Sunset Ridge School, variety of experiences for NTMS, see web.mac.com/carolbroos/iWeb/Carol%20Broos/Home.html). A note from Carol after meeting her at the 2006 TI:ME conference:

"I have a website that has many downloads on it. If you would like a short paragraph about each of the students I could put one together for you. However, MANY of the songs are composed by student that are non-traditional. Under "downloads" it takes you to my .Mac account where you can download all the music from my classes. The Mixed Media classes are the non-band classes. 6B is a General Music Class."

Q3. How do we think technology can be best used to support student learning? Neal: composition/creativity, reaching students who otherwise are not included in secondary music programs.

DBW:

- Illinois Arts Education survey of H.S. principals (2005) reports no arts courses required to graduate in 80% of Illinois schools. Nathan Edward (graduate student) found that 70-84% of students in grades 6-12 in NY, FL, CA, and OH were not enrolled in performance-based music classes.
- Reach out to the other 70% of students in our schools not in traditional performing ensembles using music technology as the "hook." What I refer to as NTMS or non-traditional music students.
- Use looping software, BIAB, recording software, to create learning environments that lead to comprehensive musicianship and MENC standards development. Deconstructist approach: why does this sound good or not? The harmony, melodic development, rhythm pattern, etc.? Use these tools to teach theme and variation techniques as a way to explore music understanding and construction.
- Recommended strategy: turn the students loose with technology (they are the experts here); you, as the music teacher, provide the aesthetic eye, ear, and hand.

Q4: What exciting developments do you see coming in music technology over the next couple of years? Neal: StarPlay accompaniment program, simplification of notation software, availability of inexpensive recording equipment.

DBW

1. Social computing that will only expand as wireless, laptops, iPods, swiss-army-knife cell-phones become ubiquitous, even more than now. Wireless iPods. Blogs, podcasting, facebook, myspace, social bookmarking (del.icio.us web site). See eSchoolNews article "Music Education Moves Online" (www.eschoolnews.com/news/showStory.cfm?ArticleID=6765)

How can we capitalize on this? Social music making, music sharing. NetJams.

Look at the Garage Band software phenomenon. How can we ride this wave and make it work for music education, bring it into the classroom.

2. musicXML. Universal exchange of music notation, a replacement for MIDI files as the lingua franca.
3. Canned music instruction over the Internet like [Connect4Education](#). Or interactive online music teaching and net-jamming over the Internet like [eJamming](#), [WorkshopLine](#), [In the Chair](#).

Q5. What challenges do we currently face in terms of using technology more effectively?

Neal: training, funding.

DBW:

1. TIME x 4!!! We provide training over and over. I see teachers coming back to workshops having to relearn what they covered before. What is missing? Time is not provided for the curriculum development that must take place to integrate new technology skills into daily classroom experiences.
2. Three pieces of software, now defunct, that we all want back: MusicShop, Rock Rap'n Roll, and HyperCard. (Not sure where else to mention this, so picked here!)

Q6. How can we better support each other as we try to deal with new technology challenges? Neal: Web resources, IMEA training workshops, State TIME chapter, expanding technology workshops at conferences

DBW:

1. Develop an organized campaign to promote music experiences for the other 70%, the non-traditional music student. The Ken Simpson model.
2. Continue to promote the concept of the MENC Technology Strategies book that Reese, McCord, and Walls did. Develop a repository of lesson plans keyed to MENC standards much along the lines of Sam Reese's CAMIL project (www-camil.music.uiuc.edu/mtt/) but as a state-wide IMEA initiative. Especially need lesson plans and strategies for (a) one-to-many application of computers in the classroom and (b) working with non-traditional music students.
3. Develop state-wide purchase initiative for music software to drive down cost and help ensure software is available for those who want it; through IMEA develop a minimum and desirable list modeling the MENC Technology Standards work of the MENC Task Force I chaired several years ago (www.menc.org/publication/books/techstan.htm)
4. State IMEA technology blog for teachers to share ideas and seek help.